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DEPARTMENT INDEX

(Itemized Index of Articles is printed on Front Cover)

	PAGE
Editorials	217
Editorial Comment	222
Original Articles	224
Lure of Medical History	275
Clinical Notes and Case Reports	279
Bedside Medicine	282
California Medical Association	287
C. M. A. Department of Public Relations	290
Woman's Auxiliary to C. M. A.	292
News	293
Letters	295
Special Articles	297
Twenty-Five Years Ago; State Examining Board	304
Index to Advertisements	Adv. p. 8

EDITORIALS†

ARE PHYSICIANS REMISS IN CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES?

Physicians Reluctant to Become Legislators.

It is to be regretted that so few physicians in the United States seek to serve their country in legislative halls. For this lack of civic interest and willingness to assume such responsibility, the medical profession is made to suffer, as witness in many commonwealths the numerous cultist examining boards, the recurring onslaughts on the standards of medical practice acts, the attacks upon legitimate public health activities, the efforts of antivivisectionists and similar well-meaning, but nothing-much-more, groups.

* * *

Next California Legislature Convenes in January, 1937.—The next California Legislature will convene in the first week of January, 1937, and we shall observe, as in years gone by, the introduction of probably five hundred or more bills, each of which, if enacted into law, may affect public health and medical practice interests. These measures, even now, are probably in their formative dress, their sponsors merely awaiting the outcome of the primary election on August 25 to determine which of the opposing candidates for each assembly and senatorial district shall be supported; so that election support then given, if coupled with victory in the final elections, in November, shall be rewarded with partisan advocacy of the proposed laws.

* * *

Medical Profession Can Take a Lesson From the Legal Profession.—As always, there will be a good representation in the legislature of the legal profession, whose younger and some older members find it worth the effort to be known as such. In addition, this year, as in the four years just passed, we may look for a rather substantial representation of citizens who are allied to some of the newer reform movements.

How beneficial, then, it would be if among the successful legislative candidates it were possible to note, as six or more assemblymen and three or

† Editorials on subjects of scientific and clinical interest, contributed by members of the California Medical Association, are printed in the Editorial Comment column, which follows.

more state senators, and in the federal legislative halls, as one or more congressmen from California, the names of those already honoring the medical profession!

* * *

Physicians Not in Active Practice Should Be More Active in Civic Matters.—Such a picture could easily be created, especially if some of the older members of the profession, whose means are such as to no longer demand their active practice, responded to the lure of civic duty and stood as candidates for these offices!

California, and other states as well, need in their legislative halls the knowledge and judgment which members of the medical profession can give, and more so than ever before in these years of social unrest.

* * *

County Medical Societies Should Also Be Alert to Civic Responsibilities.—Here and there, one is able to note signs of increased interest in matters of this kind on the part of organized medicine units. Take, for example, the action of the Board of Councilors of the Los Angeles County Medical Association in authorizing the appointment of a committee to form a class for physicians wishing to study methods of public speaking. That effort came from the experience of radio talks, it having been demonstrated that very few physicians know how to prepare and deliver an effective talk for a radio audience. The plan, for its evident value, is commended to the consideration of other component county medical societies.

* * *

Proposed Legislation to Be Studied.—As regards legislation to which the California Medical Association may give special attention in 1937, it need hardly be stated that the Council and the Committee on Public Policy and Legislation will make an earnest effort to consider most carefully all possible needs. In a general way, very little that is new is likely to be offered. If conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of former legislative sessions, it is probable that most effort will need to be directed against vicious public health legislation now in the forming, which will first come into the open at the end of January or perhaps even after the February recess.

Component county societies and individual members of the Association, therefore, are cautioned not to give endorsements or approval of legislative measures without first communicating with the Committee on Public Policy and Legislation, through the office of the Association Secretary. Embarrassing situations, and worse, will thus be avoided by observing this rule.

* * *

At the November Election, Support Only Legislative Candidates Who Hold Sound Views on Public Health.—By the time this issue of the official journal reaches its readers the primary election will have decided who are to be the opposing candidates. With that fact estab-

lished, physicians, both as individuals and through their organized units, should learn the reaction of all nominees on sound public health measures, so that support in the November election may be given to the candidates who, in these matters at issue, can best serve the people.

QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE (BASIC SCIENCE) LEGISLATION

Tentative Draft of Qualifying Certificate Law Has Been Prepared.—In the last legislature, a tentative draft of a Qualifying Certificate law was introduced, more, however, to give notice that such a statute was seriously contemplated than with any thought to urge its passage. As was anticipated, the measure, in the form proposed, was generously amended in committee, where it remained until the legislature adjourned.

The Special Committee of the California Medical Association, to whose members have been delegated the study and drafting of a Qualifying Certificate law, has no intention at this time of presenting such a statute for the consideration of the 1937 California Legislature. That does not mean that other interests or individuals may not submit such a proposed law.

* * *

An Initiative Law Is Necessary.—As has been stated in the committee reports printed in the official journal, a Qualifying Certificate (Basic Science) law to be of any value in California—a state with multiple examining boards—must be made to include each of the healing-art boards already established, as well as others that may be established in the future. In view of the fact that California has three healing-art acts—the medical practice law, a legislative enactment; the osteopathic law, an initiative statute; and the chiropractic law, also an initiative measure—it is understandable why a Qualifying Certificate law must also be enacted by initiative vote of the electorate, if it is to be made to apply to the above groups. For a basic science law passed by the legislature could not be made to include either the osteopathic or chiropractic groups.

* * *

Initiative for Qualifying Certificate Law to Be Submitted in 1938.—For this reason the proposed Qualifying Certificate law must lie over for the regular state election in November, 1938. In the meantime, when opportunity arises, the advantages and need of such a law should be stressed before lay and professional groups.

It is not anticipated that the osteopathic licentiates will give serious opposition to such a measure, because that group is constantly raising its standards of admission and should have no serious objection to such a measure. It is to be hoped that the chiropractors who are licensed will also appreciate the advantages in such a law. Practitioners of all healing-art groups already licensed in California will come under the provisions of such a law, not through examination, but by regis-